

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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R 251000Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0365

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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6. RETURNING TO THEME THAT NAP MEMBERS WERE "AGENTS OF KABUL," PRIME MINISTER VOWED THAT, AS FAR AS HIS GOVERNMENT WAS CONCERNED, BAN ON NAP WOULD NOT BE LIFTED, NOR ITS LEADERS RELEASED FROM JAIL. IF SUPREME COURT DECIDED AGAINST GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, GOP WOULD COMPLY WITH DECISION. BUT HE OBSERVED "IT WOULD NOT BE MY PERSONAL DECISION... IT WOULD NOT BE THE DECISION OF THE PEOPLE." THEREFORE, IF NAP DID NOT CHANGE ITS WAYS THEREAFTER AND

RESUMED ITS "NEFARIOUS ACTIVITIES," "THE RESPONSIBILITY SHALL NOT BE MINE BUT OF THE SUPREME COURT." IN SUCH A CASE, COURT WOULD BEAR "ENTIRE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES."

7. BHUTTO DECLARED THAT GOP KNEW WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSASSINATION OF SHERPAO, AND CLAIMED THEY HAD BEEN SENT BY AJMAL KHATTACK "FROM KABUL WITH BOMBS." HE CONTENDED THAT GOVERNMENT HAD "COMPLETE EVIDENCE" THAT NAP HAD HAND IN MATTER, AND SAID HE CONSIDERED IT "A LINK IN THE CHAIN OF ANTI-PAKISTAN ACTIVITIES OF GHAFAR KHAN, (THE LATE) DOCTOR KHAN

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SAHIB AND (KE LATE) MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD."

8. REFERRING TO UDF MEETING BEING HELD IN LAHORE AT SAME TIME HE WAS SPEAKING IN LYALLPUR, BHUTTO REMINDED AUDIENCE THAT OPPOSITION'S CONDITIONS FOR ENDING BOYCOTT OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES WERE SAME AS KABUL'S FOR HOLDING TALKS. HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT CONDITIONS, "WHETHER OR NOT THE OPPOSITION RETURNED TO PARLIAMENT AND NO MATTER IF KABUL REFUSED THE OFFER OF A DIALOGUE." HE ADDED HE EXPECTED "KABUL OR DELHI" WOULD PAY BILLS FOR UDF MEETING. (UDF DECIDED AT MEETING TO CONTINUE BOYCOTT OF ASSEMBLIES.)

9. IN BRIEF MENTION OF DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, BHUTTO FOLLOWED HIS STANDARD LINE ON PUNJAB TOUR, SAYING FOREMOST OBJECTIVES OF HIS GOVERNMENT WERE TO "RESTORE" DEMOCRACY AND ESTABLISH SOCIALISM. HE REPEATED THAT GOP WOULD "GRADUALLY FINISH" CAPITALIST SYSTEM AND REPLACE IT WITH SOCIALISM.

10. COMMENT: WHY BHUTTO CHOSE PUBLIC RALLY IN PAKISTAN'S THIRD-LARGEST CITY TO MOUNT SUCH CHAUVINISTIC ATTACK IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR. PERHAPS BECAUSE PUNJABIS ARE MOST XENOPHOBIC OF PAKISTANIS, AND HE DECIDED TO APPEAL TO BASIC EMOTIONS TO SHORE UP TOUR WHICH IS INCREASINGLY BEING CALLED LACKLUSTER AND UNSUCCESSFUL. HE MUST HAVE BEEN AWARE THAT PROVOCATIVE SPEECH WOULD BE HEARD IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND PROVOKE ADVERSE REACTIONS (WE UNDERSTAND THAT ALL INDIA RADIO HAS FEATURED INTERVIEW BY MRS. GANDHI WITH BBC TV IN WHICH SHE TOOK "WE TOLD YOU SO" LINE, POINTING OUT THAT BHUTTO BEGAN TO REASSERT HIMSELF ONLY AFTER USG DECIDED TO END ARMS EMBARGO.)

11. MARCH 25 DEPARTURE FOR INDIA OF GOP SHIPPING DELEGATION IS TAKEN BY SOME AS INDICATION THAT PUBLIC CHARGES OF TWO LEADERS HAVE NOT IMPEDED FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF SIMLA PROCESS. GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PAKISTAN TIMES OF MARCH 22, WHICH REPORTED BHUTTO SPEECH IN FULL, ALSO CARRIED LENGTHY EDITORIAL COMMENTARY DECRYING "CONFRONTATION LINE" AS "LEAST LIKELY SOLUTION TO THE ISSUE."

12. ALTHOUGH SLAPS AT "CAPITALISM" HAVE BEEN STANDARD FARE DURING BHUTTO'S "GRAND TOUR," HE HAS LATER ASKED BUSINESS-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEN TO IGNORE HIS EXHORTATIONS TO VILLAGERS WHO DO NOT GRASP COMPLEXITIES OF SITUATION. HOWEVER, SOME OF OUR CONTACTS ARE BECOMING SUSPICIOUS THAT HE MEANS WHAT HE SAYS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND IS ATTEMPTING TO PULL WOOL OVER EYES OF ELITES. HIS DISCLAIMER OF RESPONSIBILITY IF BAN ON NAP IS FOUND INVALID IS VIEWED HERE AS WARNING TO SUPREME COURT TO DECIDE IN FAVOR OF GOVERNMENT. FEW OBSERVERS OF ANY POLITICAL STRIKE NOW DOUBT THAT COURT WILL UPHOLD BAN ON

NAP.

13. ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS AND GOVERNOR
KHAR, BHUTTO WILL BEGIN LAHORE DIVISION LEG OF "GRAND
TOUR" ON APRIL 3 AT SIALKOT. WE WILL WAIT AND SEE IF SPEECHES
BECOME EVEN MORE STRIDENT AS HE APPROACHES LAHORE, HOME OF HARD-
LINERS ON INDIA AND KASHMIR.
SPENGLER

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